

Prepared by State
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This has been redrafted

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS LEADING TO
UN REGISTRATION OF SPACE VEHICLES

Executive Registry

62-3958

DD/R

Screen and remark

as appropriate

12 October 1961 - A position paper prepared for the 16th

regular session of the General Assembly was issued entitled "Report of the Committee of the Peaceful uses of Outer Space (GA Resolution 1472 (XIV))." This paper outlined initiatives which the United States proposed to take in the field of outer space at the 16th G. A. session, and included one suggesting that "states launching objects into orbit or sustained space transit should furnish data such as orbital or transit characteristics as soon as these have been determined, to the Secretary General for the purpose of registration of these launchings." A draft resolution incorporating this and other proposals was attached. (SD/A/C.1/502, 12 October 1961, Confidential).

*Memo
 9/14/61*

31 October 1961 - A memorandum was sent by the Department to Jerome B. Wiesner, President's Science Advisory Committee; Dr. Edward Welch, NASC; Robert Wade, DOD/ISA; Arnold Frutkin, NASA, and Gordon Cartright, Weather Bureau, forwarding the final (12 October) drafts of the position papers on UN outer space matters, noting that these drafts had been prepared in consultation with their offices. (Signed memorandum from Philip J. Farley, S/AE, 31 October 1961, Confidential)

20 December 1961 - UNGA unanimously adopted a resolution, a revised version of a resolution sponsored initially in the First Committee

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Committee by the US, Canada, Australia, and Italy containing proposals for the peaceful use of outer space including one calling upon "states launching objects into orbit or beyond to furnish information promptly to the UN Committee on the Peaceful uses of Outer Space, through the Secretary-General, for the registration of launchings" and requesting the Secretary-General "to maintain a public registry of the information furnished." (GA Resolution 1721 (XVI).)

29 December 1961 - The Department of State (S/AE) sent a letter to NASA and the Department of Defense setting forth the Department's views on what the registry should include and requesting comments on the Department's proposals. (Signed letter from Farley (S/AE) to Arnold Frutkin (NASA) and William P. Bundy (DOD/ISA), 29 December 1961, Confidential). No U+

12 January 1962 - DOD in reply to the Department's letter of 29 December agreed with the Department's view that the US should take the lead in reporting space objects to the UN and suggested that only objects in "sustained orbit" be registered in order to protect US freedom of action, if in the future it should prove necessary to launch satellites for only two or three orbits so as to minimize vulnerability to hostile counteraction. The DOD concurred in the Department's proposal

for submitting

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for submitting regular reports, but suggested that the US not agree to report each launching within a specific period of time and avoid a reporting procedure that would tend to bind the US to a precise reporting schedule. On the question of registry format, the DOD suggested that no distinction be made in the registry between NASA and DOD projects and strongly recommended that only minimal reports be provided on each launch, i.e.; (a) the international designation; (b) the booster; (c) the date and time of launch; (d) the orbital parameters in approximate figures. DOD did not concur in the Department's suggestion to provide information as to the vehicle's purpose. (Signed letter, Bundy (ISA) to Farley (S/AE), 12 January 1962, SECRET)

NASA's comments on the Department's 29 December proposals were received orally.

22 January 1962 - The Department of State sent a memorandum to General Taylor at the White House describing the proposed US format and procedure for registration and requested General Taylor to check it with the President to the extent General Taylor considered it desirable. Copies of this memorandum were also sent to the Deputy Secretary of Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence. It was approved by General Taylor on 22 January. (Signed memorandum from U. A. Johnson to General Maxwell Taylor, 22 January 1962, SECRET)

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23 January 1962 - A memorandum was sent to NASA (Office of International Programs) and DOD (ISA) setting forth the proposed format and procedure for registration and noting that these proposals had been checked out with the White House. The memorandum also noted that it was not planned to include data on space craft making only a few passes but not remaining in orbit or on transmitting frequencies or the status of transmission. (Signed memorandum from Farley (S/AE) to Frutkin (NASA) and Bundy (ISA), 23 January 1962, Confidential)

5 March 1962 - The US submitted its first registration list of US space launchings in response to the GA Resolution of 20 December 1961. The list included all objects in orbit as of 15 February. The information supplied by the US consisted of (a) the international designation of the object; (b) the conventional designation of the launch vehicle (e.g., Atlas-Agena); (c) purpose of the satellite (e.g., development of space flight techniques, space research and exploration, development of practical applications of space-based technology, non-functional object); (d) the date of launch, and (e) the basic orbital parameters. (UN Doc A/AC.105/INF.1). On 3 April and 7 May the US submitted additional reports covering the period 15 February to 10 April. (UN Doc A/AC.105/INF 3 and 5)

6 March 1962 - DOD acknowledged receipt of the Department's

memorandum

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memorandum of 23 January and confirmed DOD procedure for supplying data on successful DOD launches for inclusion in the registry. (Signed letter from Bundy (ISA) to Farley (S/AE), 6 March 1962, Unclassified)

NASA acknowledged receipt of the Department's memo orally and confirmed its arrangement through submission to the Department of data for the initial report to the UN.

26 April 1962 - The minutes of the Special Group meeting of 26 April 1962 noted under an item "Reporting of Outer Space Objects: that "It was agreed that Mr. Johnson would get together with Dr. Charyk and/or Mr. Gilpatrick, to try to reconcile the existing differences between State and Defense on this matter." (Memorandum for the Record -- Subject: Minutes of the Special Group Meeting of 26 April 1962, SECRET EYES ONLY).

25 May 1962 - The US submitted its registration report for the period 11 April to 30 April. This report included as supplemental information satellites launched within this period, but not in orbit at the close of the registration period (orbits of short duration). The data presented for these shots include the international designation, the launch vehicle, the satellite category and the date of launch. In addition failures during the reporting period will also be included as supplemental information; the same data being supplied as for the short-orbit satellites, less the international designation. With this

submission



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submission the US has registered all objects in orbit as of 15 February 1962, all objects successfully launched since 15 February 1962, and all satellite launch failures since 10 April 1962. The Soviets, on April 24 and May 11, completed their satellite registry through Cosmos 4.

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